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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000094

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [MASS](#) [TX](#)
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKING GROUP
REPORTS PROGRESS...AND A FEW FRUSTRATIONS

REF: 09 ASHGABAT 974

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Sylvia Reed Curran. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: In its most recent quarterly meeting, members of Embassy Ashgabat's Law Enforcement Working Group reported progress in their activities with the Turkmen government, as well as a few frustrations. All agencies reported that bilateral exchanges and training activities are continuing, but with some obstacles, including government officials' refusal to meet or communicate without submission of a diplomatic note, failure to take prompt receipt of USG-donated equipment, and problems with information sharing. The USG plans to construct a new border crossing checkpoint (BCC) on the Turkmen/Iranian border, and a Critical Incident Management Course is planned in February 2010. Overall, the Turkmen appear eager to cooperate in the law enforcement field and to learn from their U.S. counterparts. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Post's Law Enforcement Working Group ("Working Group"), comprised of DATT, Pol-Mil Chief, Office of Military Cooperation (OMC) Chief, INL Coordinator and RSO, and chaired by the Acting DCM, convened on January 14 to discuss Mission agencies' current assistance and cooperation activities with Turkmen law enforcement agencies.

DATT: TRAINING PLANNED FOR BORDER SERVICE

13. (C) DATT reported about a planned training by SOCCENT (Special Operations Command, Central) to train officers of the Turkmen State Border Service (SBS) in various skills, including patrolling, the use of ATVs and land navigation. In conjunction with the training, scheduled to take place from April until June, the Commander of SOCCENT is to visit Ashgabat January 19-20 to work out details of the training.

14. (C) According to DATT, there have been issues regarding the roles and responsibilities of the SBS versus the Ministry of Defense (MOD) in terms of which agency has responsibility for defending Turkmenistan's borders. He noted that General Major Murat Yslamov, the SBS Chief (previously head of the State Counter-Narcotics Service) wants to acquire more weapons for his service, making it more of a military organization than it already is.

OMC: ISSUES WITH THE COUNTER-NARCOTICS AGENCY

15. (C) Post's OMC Chief detailed difficulties that his office has experienced recently in its relationship with the State Counter-Narcotics Service (SCNS), particularly since the acting head of that agency, Serdar Batyrov, was replaced in September by Colonel Aman Garayev, who was brought over from the Ministry of National Security (reftel). Garayev has declined recent meeting requests from OMC. The SCNS delayed taking receipt of communications equipment that OMC had procured for their use. The first month delay cost more than USD 30,000; fortunately SBS took receipt for the next two months until SCNS finally was willing to accept the radio equipment. This was the third tranche; previous SCNS leadership had accepted radio equipment without problems. As a result of these issues, OMC, with Embassy and CENTCOM concurrence, delivered only the UHF equipment to SCNS and gave the HF radios to SBS to reward them for their cooperation. SCNS was quick to deploy the radios it received in the border area with Afghanistan. SCNS has still not facilitated training for the radio equipment, whereas SBS completed training in Summer 2009. While SCNS accepted Embassy-offered English Language Training, when post requested a meeting to introduce the teacher and discuss details, SCNS responded that it needed a diplomatic note to set up the meeting.

CENTCOM TO FUND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BCC AT SARAHS

16. (SBU) OMC also reported that CENTCOM has conducted a site survey and plans construction of a new Border Crossing

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Checkpoint at Sarahs, a town in SE Turkmenistan on the Iranian border. Construction is expected to begin in late 2010, to be completed in the fall of 2011. The total cost of the project will be approximately USD five million, with materials transported to the building site by train, rather than by truck, resulting in significant cost savings.

ATA TEAM VISIT

17. (C) RSO reported that the Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) team, who visited Ashgabat in October, learned that the Turkmen government has a particular interest in canine training, anti-cyber crime technology, and training in hostage negotiations. An upcoming team of ATA trainers will be in Ashgabat next month to conduct courses in hostage negotiations and managing a crisis command and control center. RSO, however, has been experiencing difficulties obtaining the necessary bio information from the Turkmen authorities required for the Leahy vetting request.

INL: COOPERATION CONTINUES

18. (SBU) Post's INL Coordinator outlined recent cooperation activities, including the recent and first-ever Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) study tour to the U.S. for several Turkmen officials, an upcoming UK study tour for two graduates of INL's English Language Training (ELT) course for law enforcement officers, and Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) training taking place this week, sponsored by INL and implemented by DOJ/ICITAP. In addition, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) will hold two courses in March in basic counter-narcotics skills, and DEA further plans to invite Colonel Garayev, the SCNS chief, to attend the International Counternarcotics Conference in Brazil in April.

19. (C) COMMENT: Despite the vicissitudes of working with Turkmen law enforcement, all Working Group members were able to report progress in their activities with the Turkmen government. Law enforcement activities, and working with their U.S. counterparts, continues to be a priority for the Turkmen, who are very cognizant of the import and value of cooperation in this area. END COMMENT.

